

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. HENRY A. KISSINGER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Subject: Further Studies for WSAG: Options to Inhibit NVA Military
Buildup in South Viet-Nam

In accordance with the instructions levied at the WSAG meeting on March 6 and in your subsequent memorandum, a special Ad Hoc Group with representatives from the Secretary of Defense's office, the JCS, the NSC Staff, the CIA and the Department of State have considered the question of military and diplomatic/political moves to (a) inhibit North Vietnamese infiltration of military supplies and personnel into South Viet-Nam and (b) to inhibit the attendant development -- in violation of the Paris Agreement -- of a North Vietnamese capability to launch new large-scale military operations in South Viet-Nam.

In considering its recommendations, the group was asked to weigh carefully and comment on the need for instituting actions, particularly ones which might complicate Hanoi's release of U.S. prisoners, before 28 March -- i.e., X + 60 or the day which all U.S. POWs are to be released -- as opposed to deferring such actions until after the prisoners were out.

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In addressing possible U.S. counteraction, the group took cognizance of the fact that the rationale and purpose of Hanoi's current activities are obscure. The major resupply and personnel infiltration effort now in train may reflect an attempt to refurbish Communist forces in South Vietnam and bring them up to something approaching pre-30 March 1972 capabilities by taking maximum advantage of the current dry season and the restraints Hanoi may feel the U.S. will impose on itself until the end of the prisoner release period. (Hanoi's planners, in short, may be trying to exploit the coincidence involved in the fact that the dry season will be ending soon after the prisoner release period is over.) If this line of reasoning is correct, the supply and personnel flow now in train could be a surge effort that -- whatever we do or do not do -- will taper off markedly by, say, mid-April. Conversely -- or simultaneously -- Hanoi may be (and probably is) probing to test the limits of our tolerance, with the thought that if the Communists get away with their post-28 January violations, a new norm or plateau of "accepted" behavior will be established, which Hanoi can use or cite as a precedent in the future.

As other joint intelligence assessments have noted, the Hanoi Politburo has probably not definitively made up its own mind with respect to what policies to pursue over the balance of this year. At a minimum, however, Hanoi is clearly endeavoring to make and/

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or keep the military option a credible and viable one in case primarily political competition proves unpromising. In this paper, we make no definitive judgment or assumption concerning Hanoi's longer term intentions but, instead, concentrate on steps designed to deter Hanoi from improving its military position in the south by gross violations of the Paris Agreements.

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